

"THE CANNONEER."

Comrades Mingle Praise and Criticism
of the Gunner.

Comrade John G. Leece, Captain, U. S. A.,
Adjutant-General, First Division, Nineteenth
Corps, writes to the editor of THE NATIONAL
TRIBUNE, saying:

The story of a Cannoneer is a most interesting
recital of the wide and varied experience
of its author. His narration of the events of
the extraordinary battle of Cedar Creek is very
graphic, but his assertion that the Nineteenth
Corps was "routed" and "overwhelmed by
panic" should not be permitted to pass un-
questioned. It was an early morning of the
eventful 19th of October, 1864, after dark, and
before sunrise, the enemy, under cover of
the dense fog that screened his movements,
assaulted the left of the army in front and in
flank, and at the same time sent a strong
force on the Nineteenth Corps, which held the
center. The left of this Corps rested on the
Valley Pike, its right touching the left bank of
Meadow Brook. The Sixth Corps was engaged
in an action on the right, and the Nineteenth
Corps, which followed in front of it. With
the exception of a small force of cavalry which
watched the ford beyond the left, the main
body of the army was in camp to the right and
rear of the infantry line. The fog was so
thick, surprised by the presence of an enemy in
their very midst, crumbled away. What else
could they have done? Men just aroused from
their beds are in no condition to fight organized
masses. It was a case of "fight or flee." The
Nineteenth Corps, which was in the center of
the line, was the only one that was not
under arms at daylight every morning. And
on this particular morning the Second Division,
under Gen. Grover, had been ordered to make
a reconnaissance of the enemy's position. Con-
sequently, the Nineteenth Corps was not sur-
prised, and the enemy's attack was repulsed.
Orders now came from the Commanding Gen-
eral to occupy the position on the right. The
Corps on the left had been driven and in obedi-
ence to this a portion of the Second Division
promptly moved over and confronted the
enemy. At the same time the Sixth Division
was ordered to take up a position on the right,
left and nearly parallel to the pike, or perpen-
dicular to the original line. This brigade thus
found itself in a deep ravine, where it was at
once assailed by Gordon, with overwhelming
force, in front, flank and rear. The position
of the line while the front rank was en-
gaged with the foe in front, the rear rank and
file closers had faced about to contend with
him in their rear. It was here, and here only,
that any portion of the Nineteenth Corps
driven. To have remained longer than they
did would have resulted in capture, as nearly
all of Early's force was coming up on this part
of the field. The Sixth Corps was already en-
gaged on the right, and the Nineteenth Corps
on the right, nearly a mile away, where it became
apparent to the Commanding General that the
original line could not be held, and orders were
given to the Sixth Corps to fall back to a tenable
position in the rear, and to the Nineteenth
Corps that its left had been turned it should retire
and take position on the right of the Sixth.
Up to this time all of the Eighth Corps and
portions of the two divisions of the Nineteenth
Corps had suffered heavily.

As it had been directed to do, the Nineteenth
Corps, consisting of but two divisions, forged
line of battle on the right of the Sixth Corps.
His manner of executing this was not that
of a routed or panic-stricken command, but
in the words of the corps commander, "would
have done honor to the best regular troops in
the world." The successive movements to the
right, which placed the Nineteenth Corps in
front of the Sixth Corps for a short time in rear of
the Sixth Corps, were made in obedience
to orders, and were executed with military
precision. The corps was then drawn in toward
the Sixth Corps, and the Nineteenth Corps
in close column, with regular intervals, in the
manner prescribed by the tactics. And this
was the situation of affairs when the corps com-
mander was informed of the arrival of Gen.
Sheridan, who directed that the corps be drawn
in and formed in line of battle on the right of
the Sixth Corps, then farther to the left and
within the woods. The intelligence of Gen.
Sheridan's presence and the arrival of the corps
commander, and an attack soon after made by
the enemy on the Nineteenth Corps was easily
repulsed. The newspaper carriers soon came up
and distributed their wars, and the singular
feature was presented of soldiers, in the midst
of battle, sitting or lying on the ground, reading
their favorite journals and taking politics with
one another. In 20 or 30 minutes after this
came Gen. Sheridan's orders to advance against
the enemy. The First Division, consisting of
but two small brigades, was deployed to the
right of the Second and the charge commenced.
The first of the enemy's force to give way was
Gen. Gordon's Division, which held the left of
his line. Again the Nineteenth Corps moved
so rapidly that projectiles from a battery of the
Sixth Corps dropped into its ranks, and it be-
came necessary for the commander of the Nine-
teenth Corps to send a detachment to assist the
fire of this battery, which had been directed
against a supposed enemy—in reality the troops
of the First Division.

The First Division was the first of the infantry
to regain the woods, and was then aban-
doned in the morning, and with the Second
Division, of the Second, was the only infantry
unit in support of the cavalry still farther to the
front that night. The number of effectives in
the First Division on the morning of the battle
was a few over 2,700. Its list of killed and
wounded embraced the names of 949 officers
and men. The Second Division also suffered
severely, and its commander, the gallant Grover,
who led the bayonet charge at Gettysburg, was
wounded during the advance of the afternoon.

With the exception of the almost total de-
struction of its Second Brigade in the fatal
charge on the east of the pike, everything here
treated of regarding the First Division of the
Nineteenth Corps took place under the eye of
the writer. If he refrains from specifying in-
cidents relating to other commands, it is because
his knowledge of their actions arises from
general information and not of personal ob-
servation.

Comrade C. E. Stevens, Captain, 77th N. Y.,
writes to THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, saying:
I am very much interested in the "Story of
a Cannoneer," and think he tells it well and
is also to give his battery the praise that is
also to be willing to fasten credit on
other troops who won it. I notice that he
has mentioned Upton's Brigade two or three times
as making the charge at Spotsylvania and
Grant's Vermonter at the Angle. I would
like to call his attention to the statement he
made in his sketch that the Nineteenth Corps
leaped the woods May 11, 1864, alone and un-
supported. That charge was led by Col. Upton,
but it consisted of twelve regiments selected
from the Sixth Corps, and was not the Nineteenth
Corps. In the first line was the 121st N. Y., 5th Me.
96th and 119th Pa.; the second line was the
77th and 43d N. Y., 5th Wis., 6th Me., 49th
Pa., and 3d, 2d, 5th and 6th Vt. It was a
splendid charge, and failed for lack of support.
Our regiment lost one Captain killed, one
Lieutenant killed; one Captain lost an eye. We
also lost a large number of men. We crossed the
river with over 600 men, and after that
charge could not march. The column captured
almost as many men as there were in the
charging column, for most of the regiments
had been badly handled in coming
through the woods. The 77th, 43d
N. Y., 2d, 5th and 6th Vt. belonged to the Sec-
ond Division, the others to the First Division,
Sixth Corps. I am willing that as many reg-
iments of Col. Upton's Brigade as were in the
charge should have the credit. Neither party
could take them, and at nearly dark in the
evening two boys of the 1st Mich., or the 19th

Comrade John Wagner, of Smith's Creek,
Mich., and late First Sergeant, Co. A, 16th
Mich., says:
I wish to correct the Cannoneer in his "Story
of a Cannoneer" where he says that Winlow's
Battery lost half of its guns on Cedar Creek,
in the Wilderness. This is not so, as the
guns were safe. Those two boys who were on
the right of the pike in front of Bartlett's
Battery, and between the Union and rebel line of
battle, and were contented for all day. Neither party
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Mich. crawled on their hands and knees,
snake fashion, with a small line attached to a
strong rope and got to the guns and pulled
the rope up to them with the small line, fastened
the rope to the limbers securely and came back
to our line safe. The two pieces commenced
moving towards Bartlett's Brigade and got
there all right, in spite of the heavy fire the
rebels poured from the guns. If Capt.
Winslow or Battery D did not get the guns
back I am sure that the Johnnies did not get
them. They were not lost at that time, and I
think the battery boys were there and took the
guns back to their battery.

The Cannoneer will pardon me for this cor-
rection of his most true story, I hope, for I was
there from 1861 to 1865.

Comrade A. W. Peck, of Newton, Conn., First
Lieutenant, Co. D, 17th Conn., says:
I have read the note of the Cannoneer in
which he says that he does not criticize the ac-
tion of any man of the Eleventh Corps under
the rank of brigade commander.

In regard to the right and rear of the
regiment came and lay down in the rear
of my regiment to support us, but I do not think
they fired a shot, as there was no occasion to
fire. I think it was the 6th Ohio, but I do not
know where they came from.

In regard to the part taken by Carroll's
Brigade, the Cannoneer says that Carroll said
Hancock had ordered him over to Cemetery
Hill to restore the line of the Eleventh Corps,
but he did not take him to report to anyone, nor
had he given any order in that position.
The fact of the matter is just here:
Gen. Hunt stated in an article in the Century
Magazine, that part of the Eleventh Corps line
had been weakened by sending about eight
hundred men to Green and Sickles as supports
and Hancock sent Carroll's Brigade, unasked,
to support that weak point, and that is why they
were there. The Cannoneer does not mention
this, and Carroll's Brigade was not sent to
12th N. Y. Now it is no wonder that the rebels
broke through that part of the line, when a
whole brigade had been taken away to support
some other point.

In regard to the attack on Haines, of the
12th N. Y., what part of the Eleventh Corps
line was crowded out by Carroll's Brigade. I
was there, in command of my company, the
second and third day. My regiment was not
crowded out, but held its position. The reg-
iments of my brigade were. Where were those
men posted? I did not see them.

The reported conversation between Carroll
and officers of the Eleventh Corps, about the
position of the Eleventh Corps, is a mis-
take. I do not believe a word of it. It is very
evident that Howard was satisfied with his offi-
cers and men, or we who were right there
would have heard something about it. Ames's
Brigade held the same position on East Con-
necticut Hill during the second and third day.
Gen. Howard deserves a great deal more credit
for what he did at Gettysburg than he has ever
received. He was a brave and capable leader,
and held the real key and strategic point
of the whole field. It was his 18 guns that
made Longstreet hesitate about ordering
Carroll's Brigade to attack Ames's Brigade.
Howard had moved these guns to a tenable
position in the rear, and to the Nineteenth
Corps that its left had been turned it should retire
and take position on the right of the Sixth.
Up to this time all of the Eighth Corps and
portions of the two divisions of the Nineteenth
Corps had suffered heavily.

There were few better division commanders
than Barlow, and very few better brigade com-
manders than Ames. The gallant old Eleventh
Corps needs no eulogy from me. Their record
is inscribed on their monuments of enduring
granite at Gettysburg and on East Con-
necticut Hill, where they fought and bravely fell.

Comrade O. B. Ford, of Riverside, Mich.,
Co. D, 24th Iowa, writes to THE NATIONAL
TRIBUNE, saying:

Allow me to fire a shot at our Cannoneer.
I have been much interested in his writings, and
especially of his Valley campaign under Little
Fitzhugh. I belonged to the Nineteenth
Corps, and I take exception to his view of those
three engagements fought within thirty days.
It is so human to use the big "I" and little
"u" in telling of those thrilling scenes. He
carries the idea that if it had not been for the
Sixth Corps and the Corps of the Shenandoah
would have been literally wiped off the face
of the earth. He says that the Eighth and
Nineteenth were intermingled and that the
Sixth Corps was the only one that was not
driven. This is all true, but he does not tell in
any way the onslaught was made. It is true
we had good words and plenty of guns pointing
out through the embrasures, but to our sorrow
they were pointing the wrong way. The enemy
was coming from the rear, and we were trying
to kill rebels, as they came in on our rear
and in the still hours of night and long before
the regular time for getting up. I remember
some years ago, while living in Kansas, meet-
ing a soldier who was in the Nineteenth Corps
and present at Cedar Creek. He told me that
he was one of six who volunteered to crawl up
to our guns and spike them that night, know-
ing that they were going to attack us the next
morning. It is any wonder that the Eighth
and Nineteenth Corps were not able to hold
them in check under the circumstances? And
I ask the Cannoneer if it reflects any dis-
credit on the troops for retreating, as they were
forced to do, and having time to load their
guns? I was unfortunate that morning
and was severely wounded, and in getting to
the rear with the help of our Chaplain who,
I said at that time, was the only man I had to
pass through the Sixth Corps lines. Now, I
were not in line, and ready to meet the enemy.
I can see another reason for the success of the
Sixth Corps, and that was the gallant Sheridan
and that was the reason of Gen. Sheridan's
hail with a general hurrah and a rallying to
any colors found floating in the breeze, irrespec-
tive of the color of the flag.

Another important move was being played
at this time by the rebels, who were working
disaster by pilfering our camps, ripping open
knapsacks and stealing our things, which were
left behind by the Sixth Corps from the battle
ground. This caused a lull in their onslaught,
which was also about the time that the Sixth
Corps did their heavy work. I would ask the
Cannoneer to look through the history of our
late war and find out the time that the Six-
teenth Corps was in the line of battle. I do not
remember all the regiments, but will give him a
few of them, which are 8th and 18th Ind., 22d
and 44th Me., 10th Iowa, and one New York
regiment of which I have forgotten the num-
ber. These regiments will stand the test of
the regiments of the Sixth Corps or any other
corps in the army except the old battery to
which I belonged. I notice that the Cannoneer
made the cake and have the longest pole with
which to get the persimmon.

Comrade J. E. Otis, of Denmark, N. Y., First
Sergeant and Lieutenant, Co. B, 35th N. Y.,
says:
While your "Story of a Cannoneer" may be
the best ever written, it is not correct in all
particulars—most especially in regard to the sit-
uation of the battle. The Cannoneer says that
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THE FIRST BATTLE.

An Indiana Surgeon's Claim.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: You have in
different numbers recently been publishing
statements and opinions of comrades as to the
date of the first battle between the Union
and rebel forces in the late war. Some of us
interested in making known the truth of
history in this matter. I remember nothing
of the first battle between the Union and
rebel forces at Philippi, Barbours County, Va., June
3, 1861. There the Federal troops met and
routed the rebels, under command of Porter-
field.

The Union forces were the 6th, 7th and 9th
Ind., under command of Col. Crittenden,
Dumont and Milroy; the 1st W. Va., under Col.
Kelly; the 14th Ohio, under Col. Steedman,
and Col. Barnett's at Ohio La. A line of the
forces attacked the enemy from the north side
of the town. This was early in the morning,
before the rebels were up and ready for us.
Col. Kelly and Milroy were expected to attack
from the south at the same time, but they
blew rats through which we marched the
night before hindered them from being on the
field of attack as early as expected.

The rebels were routed in great confusion,
many of them being killed. This is especially true of Port-
erfield, who mounted his unsaddled horse, him-
self not in military dress, for several of our
boys say they saw his white flag behind him
as he galloped to the right and rear.

Col. Kelly was shot through his right lung
by a rebel command officer named Sims.
The men of the 7th Ind., by command of Lieut.
H. C. Shaw, of the 7th Ind., carried him from
the field. He died of his wounds in a house in
the town near by. I, as Surgeon, examined
him. The bullet passed through his body and
under the skin at his back, from which it was
removed. The colorless blood was flowing
from his mouth. His clothes were thoroughly
wet from his own rain. I well remember
removing his kid gloves.

In this affair a young Confederate by the
name of James H. was killed by a rebel cannon-
ball. I also dressed this wounded Federal
Colonel and the first amputated leg of the late
war. And here I may say a soldier of my
regiment killed the first rebel killed in the
battle of Carrick's Ford, July 13, 1861, (Gen. R.
S. Garnett). In this Philippi affair my reg-
iment (the 7th Ind.) had one man killed. His
name was Charles Degener.

In the third campaign the Union
forces captured a large amount of stores from
the enemy, about 60 wagons and contents, two
pieces of artillery, several horses and mules,
and the baggage of the Oglethorpe Artillery.
The rebel flag was captured and carried to
the town near by. I, as Surgeon, examined
him. The bullet passed through his body and
under the skin at his back, from which it was
removed. The colorless blood was flowing
from his mouth. His clothes were thoroughly
wet from his own rain. I well remember
removing his kid gloves.

From these facts we of the 7th Ind. claim
to have been among the first in active duty and
battle in the late war, and our man killed in
that affair to have been among the first killed
in the late war.

Here I may say that an Indian was per-
haps the last man killed by a rebel cannon ball
in the war (a month and four days after Lee's
surrender), by the rebels under Kirby Smith,
in southwest Texas, on the 13th of May, 1865,
at White's or Palmetto Ranch, on the Rio
Grande, near Brownsville. The Indian was
Williams, and he belonged to the 34th Ind.
Indians think they were early and late
in the struggle for the Union.—George W.
New, Surgeon, 7th Ind., Indianapolis, Ind.

BATTLE OF KINSTON.

The Part Taken by the 10th Conn.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Permit me to
say a few words in relation to the communica-
tion of Jacob D. Brown, under the title of "A
Little Saracens from a Pennsylvania Man," in
your issue of March 20. In the first place I
will preface my remarks by saying that the
only unpleasant feature of the article pub-
lished in THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE is the mis-
take in the title of the communication. It is
the eternal clashing of opinions in regard
to this, that and the other battle, as nar-
rated by the different participants in the same.
It cannot reasonably be expected that
each of the participants in the battle should
occupy different points of observation in
time of action, should give a like account of a
battle in which they were engaged. Each
writes from his own personal knowledge, and
each has a right to state his own version of
the battle, and each has a right to call out
each other's wilful falsifiers or fools.

Comrade Brown's article is in reply to the
communication of James H. Rogers, of the 10th
Conn., which was published a few weeks ago.
Now, I do not wish to say that Comrade
Brown's article is in any way intended to
distort the facts or falsify history in the
least in writing his account of the part taken
in the battle of Kinston, N. C., by his
regiment; and every fair-minded person can-
not but think that Comrade Brown's account
is as far as to write down Comrade Rogers as
an ass—he virtually has—because he tries
to give the noble regiment of which he
was a member due credit for the gallant part
they took in that battle, and he does not
steps the bounds of courtesy, but of common
decency also.

It is not because I was a member of the same
regiment that I am so much interested in it, but
because I was a member of it, and I have
taken up the subject in my defense. I do not
believe he intended to claim and far be it
for me to claim that the 10th Conn. "At the
Confederacy single-handed" at the battle of
Kinston. It is any wonder that the Eighth
and Nineteenth Corps were not able to hold
them in check under the circumstances? And
I ask the Cannoneer if it reflects any dis-
credit on the troops for retreating, as they were
forced to do, and having time to load their
guns? I was unfortunate that morning
and was severely wounded, and in getting to
the rear with the help of our Chaplain who,
I said at that time, was the only man I had to
pass through the Sixth Corps lines. Now, I
were not in line, and ready to meet the enemy.
I can see another reason for the success of the
Sixth Corps, and that was the gallant Sheridan
and that was the reason of Gen. Sheridan's
hail with a general hurrah and a rallying to
any colors found floating in the breeze, irrespec-
tive of the color of the flag.

Another important move was being played
at this time by the rebels, who were working
disaster by pilfering our camps, ripping open
knapsacks and stealing our things, which were
left behind by the Sixth Corps from the battle
ground. This caused a lull in their onslaught,
which was also about the time that the Sixth
Corps did their heavy work. I would ask the
Cannoneer to look through the history of our
late war and find out the time that the Six-
teenth Corps was in the line of battle. I do not
remember all the regiments, but will give him a
few of them, which are 8th and 18th Ind., 22d
and 44th Me., 10th Iowa, and one New York
regiment of which I have forgotten the num-
ber. These regiments will stand the test of
the regiments of the Sixth Corps or any other
corps in the army except the old battery to
which I belonged. I notice that the Cannoneer
made the cake and have the longest pole with
which to get the persimmon.

Comrade J. E. Otis, of Denmark, N. Y., First
Sergeant and Lieutenant, Co. B, 35th N. Y.,
says:
While your "Story of a Cannoneer" may be
the best ever written, it is not correct in all
particulars—most especially in regard to the sit-
uation of the battle. The Cannoneer says that
the Sixth Corps was the only one that was not
driven. These regiments will stand the test of
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